

Marriage in the Military

Immediate Response

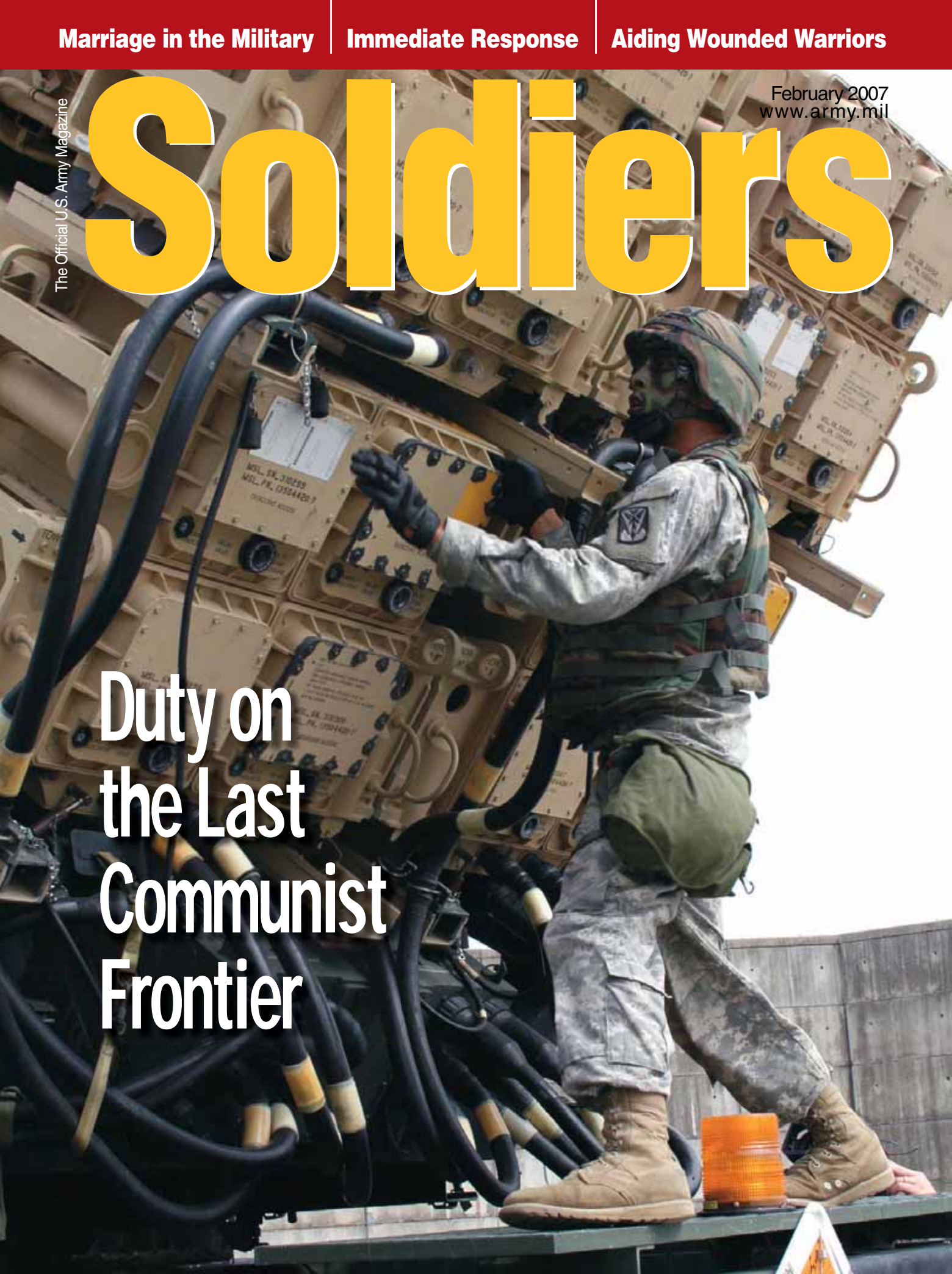
Aiding Wounded Warriors

The Official U.S. Army Magazine

February 2007
www.army.mil

Soldiers

Duty on
the Last
Communist
Frontier





Cover Story — Page 12
SPC Daniel Nebrida of the Osan,
Korea-based 1st Battalion, 43rd
Air Defense Artillery Regiment,
checks a Patriot missile launcher
during a crew drill.
— Photo by Heike Hasenauer

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WHILE the nation's focus is understandably on the ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, it's important for us all to remember that Soldiers are also serving in a variety of other crisis areas. Among the most important of those areas in terms of America's national security is the Korean peninsula, and this month our senior editor, Heike Hasenauer, brings us a series of articles about the important work the Army is continuing to do there. Heike's coverage, which begins on page 12, gives us an in-depth look at what duty is like on "The Last Communist Frontier."

And speaking of Soldiers serving around the world, check out the article "Practicing an Immediate Response," beginning on page 28. You'll learn how Soldiers from U.S. Army, Europe, traveled to Bulgaria to practice their combat skills in concert with Bulgarian and Romanian troops.

Among the other stories we're bringing you in this issue

are Steve Harding's "Aiding Wounded Warriors" — a close-up look at the important work being done by the Army's Wounded Warrior Program; Ashley Stetter's "Marriage in the Military;" MAJ Pam Newbern's fascinating article on "Web OPSEC;" and LTC Joseph Knott's timely "Preserving

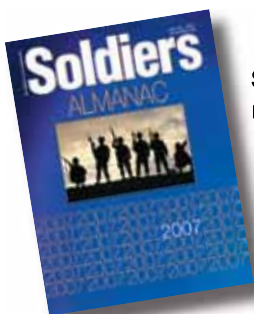
Training Grounds."

We hope you enjoy each and every story.

Gil High
Gil High
Editor in Chief

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Soldiers

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Soldiers

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Thomas Jefferson Awards
Outstanding Flagship
Writer 2005
Beth Ann Reece

Calendar Kudos

GREAT job on the 2007 Planning Calendar! Wonderful photos, useful information — all in all, a fantastic reference.

Of course, you did manage to put St. Patrick's Day in the wrong month, but other than that, fine work.

SGM A. Smith
via e-mail

I REALLY enjoy getting the new Soldiers Planning Calendar each year, and the 2007 version is exceptional. The photos were especially good this year, with a nice mix of action shots, scenery and families.

One question — isn't St. Patrick's Day supposed to be in March?

SGT Dale Knudsen
via e-mail

Thanks for the kind words about the 2007 Planning Calendar. We were able to call on some great photographers this time around, and we're proud to be able to showcase their work. And yes, we managed to misplace St. Patrick's Day, as many of our readers (both Irish and otherwise) were quick to point out. Our only excuse is that we started our own St. Paddy's party a few months early...

Fort Lewis Focus

I REALLY liked your November story "Expanding Fort Lewis." I've been stationed there a couple of times during my career, and have always enjoyed the post and its surrounding communities.

The story really hit the nail on the head when it talked about Fort Lewis's impact on Tacoma and other nearby cities. And the impact isn't just financial — with thousands of Soldiers and their family members living and working in the area, they are really the face of the Army as far as many people in Washington state are concerned. And in my experience, the civilians who live near Fort Lewis have always been proud of, and happy to support, "their" Soldiers.

LTC B.R. McMillan
via e-mail

IT'S good to know that the people managing Fort Lewis's growth are trying to do it in a way that will not harm the installation's unique landscape. It is truly one of the most beautiful posts in the Army, and anyone who has ever done a tour there will agree that it would be a shame to degrade the installation's natural beauty.

Thanks for an interesting look at one of my favorite places.

James Cochran
via e-mail

Pohakuloa's Challenges

The November article on Hawaii's Pohakuloa Training Area brought back some memories — both happy ones, and painful ones.

While training at PTA a few years ago I really enjoyed the Big Island's beauty, and I had a wonderful time exploring the island in what little down time we had. Those are the happy memories.

The painful memories have to do with PTA's challenging terrain — we always seemed to be climbing hillsides made of razor-sharp lava or low-crawling through spike-covered plants. In other words, the conditions were just as challenging, and as much of a factor in our operations, as they are in a real war zone. Which is what good training is supposed to be like, right?

SFC Bill Taylor (Ret.)
Manhattan, Kan.

Bataan Marchers

I TOOK part in the Bataan Memorial Death March a few years back, and I think your November article really captured both the physical challenge of the event and the way it honors the U.S. and Filipino service members who had to suffer through the actual World War II march.

Thanks for reminding us of the reason for the march, and for showing us how much sheer determination it takes to tackle this one-of-a-kind event.

Kenneth Waldon
via e-mail

I WAS fascinated by your November article on the Bataan Memorial Death March at White Sands Missile Range. The story mentioned that the next march is coming up soon — can you provide any further details?

1st Lt. Kaitlin Carson, USMCR
Oceanside, Calif.

FOR details on the 2007 event — which takes place next month — visit www.bataanmarch.com.

More on Army Blue

IN his October letter to the editor, MSG Alcott indicated that he thought the Army Blue Uniform looked "like a new Air Force uniform."

I completely disagree. I think the Army Blue uniform is a great-looking outfit, and one that has a lot of tradition behind it. It's a uniform any Soldier should be proud to wear, and it definitely beats "Air Force Blah."

SPC Tony Andrews
via e-mail

Smoke Free in Iraq

I LIKED the October article about Soldiers in Iraq who are trying to stop smoking. Though they're surrounded by all sorts of things that are more immediately dangerous than cigarettes, it's nice to see that they realize that smoking is just as deadly as an IED or a sniper's bullet.

Be strong, guys — you CAN quit.

Mary Kalinski, RN
Rahway, N.J.

Soldiers values your opinion

To comment, keep your remarks to under 150 words, include your name, rank and address and send them to:

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◀ **Afghanistan**

A sniper team from the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team scans the horizon after reports of suspicious activity along the hilltops near Dur Baba during a medical civic-action project.

— Photo by CPL Bertha Flores

► Iraq

An Iraqi child tries on SPC Taryn Emery's sunglasses during a humanitarian assistance mission in Qaryat Al Majarrah.

— Photo by Lance Cpl. Ryan Busse, USMC



▲ Ethiopia

Members of the Guam Army National Guard — part of Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa — prepare to hand out bottles of soda to children at an orphanage in Dire Dawa.

— Photo by Staff Sgt. Ricky A. Bloom, USAF

► Southwest Asia

Divers of the 544th Engineer Team undertake a range of missions throughout the Third Army/U.S. Army Central Command's area of responsibility, including Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Oman and Kenya. Here (from left to right), SPC Brian Myers, SSG Kurt Langely, SSG Eric Shultz and SGT David Gills do some heavy lifting.

— Photo by 40th Public Affairs Detachment



▲ Iraq

SSG Coriey Burkman of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, and a soldier from the 1st Co., 1st Bn., 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division, head upstairs to clear the second floor of an Iraqi home during a cordon-and-search operation in Hawijah.

— Photo by SFC Michael Guillory

► Iraq

SPC Lindsey Raabe, a medic with Company C, 115th Bde. Support Bn., examines a patient during a medical operation in Mushada.

— Photo by SPC Jeffrey Alexander





AIDING

Wounded Warrior

SG Johnathan Holsey was certain his military career had ended on Nov. 10, 2004. That day, just outside Ramadi, Iraq, a roadside bomb exploded near his convoy, so severely injuring his left leg that it had to be amputated just below the knee.

But now, more than two years later, Holsey is still on active duty and looking forward to a long and successful military career. That his time as a Soldier didn't end the day he lost his leg he credits to two things — the excellent medical care he received, and the Army Wounded Warrior Program, or AW2.

In late October, Holsey, now stationed at MacDill Air Force base, Fla., journeyed to Arlington, Va., to participate in the second AW2 symposium.

Like the other 54 delegates — drawn from the ranks of wounded Soldiers and from their families — Holsey was there to share his insights on how the program might better serve its constituents.

Organized by AW2 director COL Mary Carstensen and her staff, the five-day symposium brought the delegates together with some 30 subject-matter experts from AW2, U.S. Army Human Resources Command, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor and representatives from various veterans groups.

The whole point of the event, said HRC commander MG Sean Byrne, was to “better fulfill a pledge that all Soldiers in our Army make to one another — ‘I will never leave a fallen comrade.’ The phrase isn’t just part

of our warrior ethos, it’s what AW2 stands for. This program was established to ensure that our Army would never leave a fallen comrade behind — not on the battlefield, and not during the long, hard days of recovery.”

Navigating the Maze

Established in April 2004 as the Disabled Soldier Support System, AW2 assumed its current name in November 2005. The change did not alter the organization’s mission, though, Carstensen said.

“To be injured or wounded in combat changes a Soldier’s life forever, and the nation helps relieve the burdens of a life-altering injury or wound by providing a range of benefits,” she said. “But to navigate the maze of programs and agencies is challenging, especially when Soldiers and their families are focused on recovery and rehabilitation. Our task is to help them navigate that maze, so they can gain the greatest benefit from the variety of available assistance and benefit programs.”

One way AW2 helps participants navigate the maze is by assigning them a “soldier-family management

◀ For most Army Wounded Warrior Program participants, the long road to recovery starts with medical evacuation from the combat zone.



Senior Airman Brian Ferguson, USAF

rs

Story by Steve Harding

► A Soldier evacuated from Iraq arrives at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. AW2 participants are assigned a “soldier-family management specialist” as soon as possible, often upon initial arrival at Landstuhl.

specialist,” Carstensen said.

“The SFMSs are the experts on the entire array of benefits, and they’re sort of the personal assistants for our Soldiers and families,” she said. “Every Soldier in the AW2 program has an assigned SFMS, and it’s that specialist’s task to help the Soldier and family through the program.”

A Soldier’s progress through the AW2 program begins with a determination of eligibility, Carstensen said.

“An AW2 Soldier is essentially one who has been severely wounded or injured since 9/11 — either in or outside a combat theater — and has received or will receive a medical retirement from the Army,” she said. “AW2 participants suffer from such things as loss of limb; loss of sight; partial or total paralysis; brain or spinal-cord damage; traumatic brain injury; post-traumatic stress disorder; severe burns; disfigurement; and multiple gunshot wounds.”

All are life-altering conditions, Carstensen said, and each Soldier and family receives the assistance and advice needed to ensure the individual is as prepared as possible to live with the results of combat wounds or injury.

Heike Hasenauer (both this page)



A Personal Journey

While AW2 staffers are dedicated to helping Soldiers and their families cope with life-changing wounds or injuries, program participants say that the essential first step on the long road back to wellness is a very personal one.

“I think it’s always hard for a Soldier to come to grips with the effects of a serious injury, since we always try to stay in the best shape possible and are used to pushing ourselves physically,” Holsey said. “I know it was very hard for me at first, because when I lost my



► Helping injured Soldiers face repeated surgeries on the long road to recovery is a key element of the support AW2 provides.



▲ AW2 director COL Mary Carstensen greets program participants SSG Jerrod Behee and his wife, Marissa, on the one-year anniversary of Behee's injury.

leg I was suddenly faced with the fact that I would never again be able to do things the way I had before. There was also a lot of pain, and that can sap your strength and your will in a way you never imagined."

The only way for seriously injured

or wounded Soldiers to move forward, Holsey believes, is to accept the new realities imposed by the disability.

"You really have to come to grips with the pain and the physical changes, and then you have to move forward and get on with your life," he said.

That's a sentiment echoed by another AW2 participant, 1LT David Folkerts, whose left arm was permanently damaged by the detonation of an improvised explosive device near Taji, Iraq, in April 2005.

"The first few months after you get hit can be the hardest of your life, because you go from being young and fit to being an invalid who has to depend on other peoples' help to do almost everything," Folkerts said. "But you eventually reach a point where you have to make up your mind to do whatever it takes to get on with the best life possible."

For Holsey, Folkerts and many other AW2 participants, "getting on with life" has meant multiple surgeries, long periods of physical rehabilita-

► AW2 participant SGT Joey Bozik and his wife, Jamie, are welcomed home in Danville, Calif.

AW2 Snapshot

At the time of the October symposium there were some 1,450 Army Wounded Warrior Program participants. About three-quarters are medically retired and about one quarter remain on active duty. Two thirds are from the active Army, with the remaining third from the Army National Guard and Army Reserve.

— HRC Public Affairs Office

tion and, in Holsey's case, learning to use several types of high-tech prosthetic legs. He and many other amputees have become so adept with the artificial limbs, in fact, that they have been able to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test, a key achievement for AW2 participants who want to remain on active duty.

Fine-Tuning AW2

Ensuring that seriously wounded and injured Soldiers and their families have access to all the information and assistance they'll need to guarantee the best quality of life is one of the main

Symposium Issues

Among the continuing issues discussed at the October symposium were:

≡ The need to improve dissemination of AW2 information to AW2 Soldiers, family members, units and medical facilities.

≡ AW2 Soldiers need to be identified and actively managed.

≡ Family members who serve as an AW2 Soldier's caregiver need more education and support.

≡ AW2 Soldiers should be informed of the opportunity for Continuation on Active Duty (COAD) or Continuation on Active Reserve (COAR) so they may make informed decisions about their futures.

≡ AW2 Soldiers with spinal cord injuries or traumatic brain injuries should reach optimum care prior to the initiation of Medical Evaluation Boards and Physical Evaluation Boards.



"The process of identifying and eliminating those obstacles won't be easy," Byrne said. "But in the long run, it will help strengthen the AW2 program and the Army."

reasons for the October AW2 symposium, Carstensen said.

"While our Army is committed to this program, and while we don't have any issues in terms of resources or support, there are challenges," Carstensen said. "The biggest one, I think, is that we're bringing together a whole range of organizations and programs and looking at the entire continuum of care and support available to these Soldiers and their families. There is a lot of information, and to do the best job we can requires a lot of coordination. That inevitably means there are rough spots."

Symposium participants are helping the Army iron out those rough spots, Byrne said.

"In the weeks leading up to this event, Soldiers, family members and caregivers identified obstacles and stumbling blocks that they experienced on the wounded Soldiers' journeys to recovery," he said. "The symposium allows us to use the input of all participants to prioritize the issues and make recommendations for dealing with them. Those recommendations are then to be passed on to the Army's senior leaders." [See "Symposium Issues" box on preceding page.]

"The process of identifying and eliminating those obstacles won't be easy," Byrne said. "But in the long run, it will help strengthen the AW2 program and the Army."

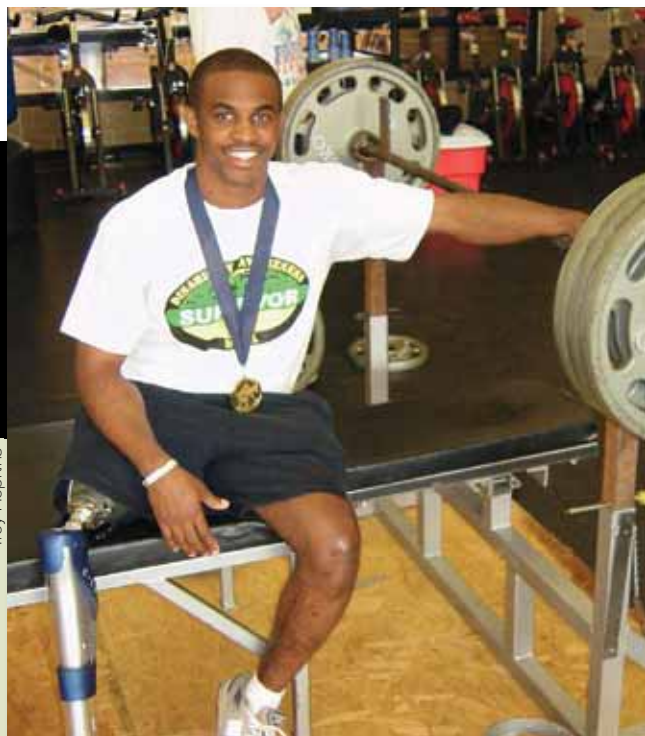
And that effort has the full support of AW2 participants, Folkerts said.

"This symposium is a great idea, since Soldiers who've been wounded and who have gone through the entire military medical process can attend and share their concerns and needs," he said. "We have a lot of issues to discuss, and this is a great opportunity for us and our families to talk directly to the people from the agencies that make the policies."

Nor will this be the last such symposium, Carstensen said.

"We'll have conferences like this at least a few more times to make sure we have a good handle on the issues,"

Troy Hopkins



▲ A primary goal of AW2 is to encourage wounded and injured Soldiers to move ahead with their lives, attaining a level of health and fitness that will benefit them whether or not they remain in the Army.

she said, "and so we can develop the response mechanisms that will help us solve all the outstanding issues.

"This is important work, and everyone here is dedicated to making AW2 the best program it can be," Carstensen added. "This program exemplifies what it means to take care of a fellow Soldier, because saying that we will never leave a fallen comrade behind is a sacred trust, and it is one of the foundations of our Army and its success. Caring for our wounded warriors and helping them transition into the rest of their lives is the ultimate expression of that trust." 📺



For more on the Army Wounded Warrior Program, visit www.aw2.army.mil



Duty on the LAST COMMUNIST FRONTIER

Story and Photos by Heike Hasenauer

While world attention is focused on Iraq and Afghanistan, Soldiers continue to guard freedom's frontier in the Republic of Korea.

KOREA — largely forgotten as the world focuses its attention on war-on-terror fronts — became the center of attention in October, when underground seismic activity suggested that communist North Korea had tested a nuclear weapon.

Earlier, in July 2006, North Korea was at center stage after it launched seven missiles, including a long-range Taepodong-2 that could have reached the United States had it not failed shortly after takeoff, Defense Department officials reported.

Best Place to Be

Despite the inherent dangers of living virtually at the doorstep of a communist-ruled society that boasts the fourth largest army in the world and being within range of several thousand North Korean artillery tubes [*see related story, "The Divided Korea"*] — an assignment to South Korea, officially

the Republic of Korea, or ROK, "is the assignment of greatest stability right now," said Eighth U.S. Army commander LTG David P. Valcourt.

That's because the majority of "Soldiers who arrive here aren't preparing to deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan, nor have they just come from those places," Valcourt said. When they arrive in the ROK, they are deployed to a real-life contingency operation, where officials take the possibility of war seriously every day.

Because of the dangers, "Soldiers here can expect programs to support them," Valcourt said. Among those is an equitable cost-of-living allowance, an assignment-incentive program that pays a Soldier who extends his tour in Korea up to \$400 extra per month, and a command "that bends over backward to take care of families."

In 2006 Eighth Army reported it retained 3,009 Soldiers during fiscal year 2006, and 14,025 Soldiers through the AIP since 2003, what command officials describe as "a remarkable success story resulting in reduced personnel turbulence, improved readiness and decreased PCS costs."

Continuing Changes

U.S. military personnel in Korea will soon witness great change, said Valcourt. Between now and 2008 they'll relocate farther south from the Yongsan Garrison in Seoul to Camp Humphreys, near Pyongtaek, and other areas.

Some 19 U.S. camps in South Korea have closed since 2003, said MAJ Tanya Bradsher, an Eighth Army spokeswoman. By 2008 some 70 camps will have closed, leaving 10 camps at two major location hubs. In

➤ (Main photo) Patriot crewman PFC Brian Overstreet inspects a launcher near Osan. (Inset) A Soldier of the Camp Humphreys-based 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade prepares an AH-64 Apache for a mission.

➤ Eighth U.S. Army commander LTG David P. Valcourt said U.S. military personnel in Korea will soon be witnessing significant changes.





By 2008 the size of U.S. forces in the Republic of Korea will have been reduced by about 12,500, to around 25,000.

total, some 36,000 acres of land will be returned to the ROK government.

The changes are part of the 2004 Yongsan Relocation Plan, an agreement between U.S. and ROK officials to move all U.S. forces out of the Seoul area and south of the Han River by December 2008. A reduction in force will have reduced the size of U.S. forces in Korea in 2008 by 12,500 — from 37,000 in 2004 to about 25,000 — said EUSA spokesman MAJ Jerome Pionk.

In 2006 the predominantly U.S. responsibility for the security of the Joint Security Area on the demilitarized zone, or DMZ, between North and South Korea was transferred

to the ROK army. The current JSA security battalion is composed of 98 percent ROK soldiers commanded by a U.S. officer. [See related story on the DMZ.]

Moving South

It will be to the U.S. forces' advantage to move south, officials say, since the only remaining communist stronghold in the world also has the most heavily armed border in the world, and it lies about 25 miles north of Seoul, the current home of many of the 25,000 U.S. service members stationed in the ROK.

"Moving will also allow us to create efficiencies, by significantly reducing the number of commissaries and other support facilities," said Valcourt.

Some \$8 billion — twice the amount of money and materiel going into force structure at Fort Bliss, Texas, to accommodate troops being relocated to the United States from other parts of the world — is going into Camp Humphreys. The cost will be borne jointly by the United States

◀ This recently opened 8-story apartment building at Camp Humphreys accommodates 48 families and is the first of a projected three-building, \$40.7 million complex.

▼ Realistic training is a constant for U.S. units in Korea. Here, members of the 1st Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, undergo convoy-operations training near Camp Casey.





▲ The Armed Forces Recreation Center's Dragon Hill Lodge in Yongsan is one of many current U.S. military facilities scheduled for turnover to the South Korean government.

and the ROK over the next five years, said Valcourt.

Enhancing Stay-Put Facilities

LTC John Chavez, commander of 1st Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 35th ADA Brigade, at Osan Air Base, is already looking forward to a much larger convoy live-fire course that will be available to his Soldiers through the transformation of U.S. forces in Korea.

Located at Story Range, not in the south, but north near Camp Casey — where several 2nd Inf. Div. outlying camps have already been consolidated into Camp Casey — it's

part of a larger U.S.-ROK program to enhance the U.S. facilities that will not be relocated, said Pionk.

Because the role of some 8,000 2nd Inf. Div. Soldiers is largely to guard the demilitarized zone with its ROK counterparts, the division will not move south, and Warrior Base, the support area at the training range, is going to be built up to accommodate a battalion-size training rotation, Chavez said.

"By next summer, we'll have a much larger convoy live-fire course, which will allow Soldiers to fire from both sides of the road," Chavez said. They'll also be able to train on a hand-

grenade range, claymore-mine range and others.

Recently, Battery E, 43rd ADA Regt., from Camp Casey, underwent convoy-operations training. Artillery simulators, smoke, and mock improvised explosive devices created realism on the range as the convoy rolled through. The Soldiers reacted to various notional events, including an ambush, and were required to breach obstacles and fire on designated targets.

Meanwhile, a Patriot missile crew of the 1st Bn., 43rd ADA, underwent a drill to determine its readiness to launch missiles should the need ever



arise to protect vital air assets at Osan Air Base.

Indeed, training on the Korean peninsula is constant and intense, said Valcourt. "We continue to plan, coordinate and participate in two annually conducted joint/combined exercises with ROK forces to sustain peak readiness standards for our deterrence mission."

The 3,000-member 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade, which normally moves troops and supplies, would be largely responsible for using its additional two battalions of UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and CH-47 Chinooks to evacuate noncombatants, said MAJ David Law, assistant brigade operations officer.

Because of the close proximity to

▲ Soldiers of the 1st Bn., 43rd ADA, practice target-engagement techniques at Story Range near Camp Casey.

North Korea, and the potential danger associated with accidentally crossing into communist-run territory, pilots must undergo 25 to 30 hours of special instruction to fly near the DMZ. And pilots new to Korea always fly with a flight instructor first to become familiar with authorized routes, Law said. Besides the potential danger of wandering into enemy territory, Korea's mountainous terrain and smog-restricted visibility creates other challenges, pilots said.

Enjoying the Country

While Soldiers in units like the 2nd Inf. Div., 11th ADA Bde. and 2nd CAB train hard and regularly to ensure they're ready to go to war, U.S. commanders in the ROK encourage their troops to take advantage of local cultural programs to gain an appreciation and awareness of their host nation and its 5,000-year history.

The joint U.S.-ROK armies' Good Neighbor Program encourages U.S.-

◀ Radio broadcaster SPC Kimutaya Lambirth is one of many American Forces Network-Korea Soldiers helping entertain and inform military personnel.



The Divided Peninsula

THE demilitarized zone, or DMZ, between North and South Korea extends 1.25 miles on either side of the 151-mile-long Military Demarcation Line.

The Korean peninsula was divided into communist North Korea and democratic South Korea in 1945. And technically, the two Koreas are still at war, since the 1950 to 1953 Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty.

Today, differences in the two countries are said to be as apparent as differences were between eastern and western Europe before European unification. While South Korea is a vibrant, modern nation, most visitors to North Korea describe it as dark, gloomy, unadorned, and without color or vitality.

Aid agencies have estimated that some two million people have died in North Korea since the mid-1990s because of severe food shortages, and the country relies on foreign aid to feed millions of its people. They say, too, that the north has an estimated 200,000

political prisoners.

The totalitarian state has been accused of such human-rights abuses as torture, public executions and forced abortions, according to U.S. State Department reports. It suffers a dilapidated economy, but boasts one of the world's largest standing armies. President George W. Bush called North Korea part of an "axis of evil," after the country reactivated a nuclear reactor and banned international weapons inspectors several years ago.

It's no wonder that the ROK — an area roughly the size of Indiana and inhabited by some 48 million people — is among the most dangerous places in the world; it's the only place where American Soldiers still face an armed communist threat.

U.S. and ROK troops who are part of the United Nations Command's Joint Security Area are right on the border, and Soldiers stationed at the northernmost of the Army's installations, Camp Casey, are only about 10 miles south of the border with North Korea. — *Heike Hasenauer*



Korean friendship and understanding through community relations-civil affairs efforts that reach millions of military personnel and civilians annually, Valcourt said.

"Being stationed in Yongsan," the U.S. military district of Seoul, "is like living in any big city," said CPT Stacy Ouellette, an Eighth Army public affairs officer, who's been in Korea since June 2004.

"One of the greatest things about being assigned here is the opportunity to explore a foreign land. There's so much to do and see here," said Ouellette, who has embraced the Korean culture and eagerly shares her knowledge of her hosts' customs and traditions.

Ouellette knows her way around Seoul by car and subway, and can direct visitors to such notable attractions as

Nam Dae Mun, a traditional Korean marketplace; the Seoul Sungnyemun, the ancient main gate of Seoul's fortress wall; and Seoul tower.

And she can maneuver her way through the frenzied activity of Seoul, where throngs of shoppers swarm the famed Itaewon district, with its mind-boggling array of shops, restaurants and street-side vendors, or the more

➤ Korea's fast-growing and vibrant economy allows the nation's citizens to enjoy a high standard of living, especially in Seoul and the other large cities.



➤ Duty in South Korea offers American service members the chance to intimately experience the country's culture, history and food, including octopus and many other local delicacies.





“... we want to enhance the quality of life for our service members, civilians and families...”

upscale Insadong district, where visitors scour antique shops for treasures or stop to buy such local delicacies as ginseng-flavored taffy and dried octopus.

“The hardest part about being in Korea is being away from family. Also, the time difference between here and my home in Boston makes calling home whenever I want to more difficult,” Ouellette said.

Eighth U.S. Army composes about 80 percent of the force within U.S. Forces, Korea, said Eighth Army CSM Barry Wheeler.

For most of these Soldiers, a tour in Korea is still consid-

ered a “hardship tour,” he said, “not because of the location, but because most people don’t get to bring their families with them. Ninety-five percent of the time, Soldiers come here on a one-year, unaccompanied tour.”

Plans for the Future

Valcourt and USFK commander GEN B.B. Bell want to make a tour in Korea more like a tour in Europe, Wheeler said. “It’s hard to deliver the quality of life you want to deliver with so many camps. That’s the overarching theme — consolidation. The plan is to consolidate into four hubs south of the Han River.

“At the same time, we want to enhance the quality of life for our service members, civilians and family members by providing more accompanied tours,” he said.

In any event, the United States is committed to helping the ROK army defend South Korea, Wheeler said. That will not change. 🇺🇸

◀ A Korean woman (at right) and her American friend model traditional Korean kimonos. Americans say cross-cultural friendships are one of the best aspects of serving in South Korea.



Augmenting the Force

ABOUT 2,800 KATUSAs — Korean Augmentees to the U.S. Army — complement U.S. Soldiers in Korea on virtually every installation, and in every support role, said Eighth U.S. Army spokesman MAJ Jerome Pionk.

The Korean soldiers, who would otherwise serve a two-year mandatory tour of duty in the Republic of Korea army, serve a two-year tour with U.S. forces in Korea. They train, work and live with the American Soldiers, wear U.S. uniforms, and share meals and barracks with their American counterparts.

Paid by their own government, the KATUSAs progress up the ranks quickly, typically becoming sergeants within two years, Pionk said.

However, unlike U.S. sergeants, they earn roughly \$80 per month. While the pay is much less than what U.S. Soldiers receive, being able to live and work closely with U.S. Soldiers has much more than made up for the difference, said SGT Jiyong Park, a

KATUSA who works for EUSA as a driver, ferrying visitors throughout the South Korean portion of the peninsula.

“In the U.S. Army, I get to choose what I want to eat,” said Park.

Besides affording him the opportunity to take driver’s training, being a KATUSA has helped Park improve his English skills and has cemented friendships that will last a lifetime, he said.

◀ A vital part of U.S. operations, KATUSAs are paid by their own government but wear U.S. uniforms and share Soldiers’ duties, meals and barracks.



▲ KATUSAs spend two-year tours with U.S. forces, and receive the same training as their U.S. counterparts.

By the same token, “we learn a lot from the KATUSAs,” said EUSA spokeswoman CPT Stacy Ouellette. They not only supplement the U.S. military work force, KATUSAs introduce younger Soldiers, who might otherwise be prone to stay on the U.S. installations, to the area, the food and Korea’s rich heritage and customs, she said.

Like Park, most KATUSAs are selected for the program at age 19 or 20, after a year of college. ROK army officials select candidates based on aptitude and English skills.

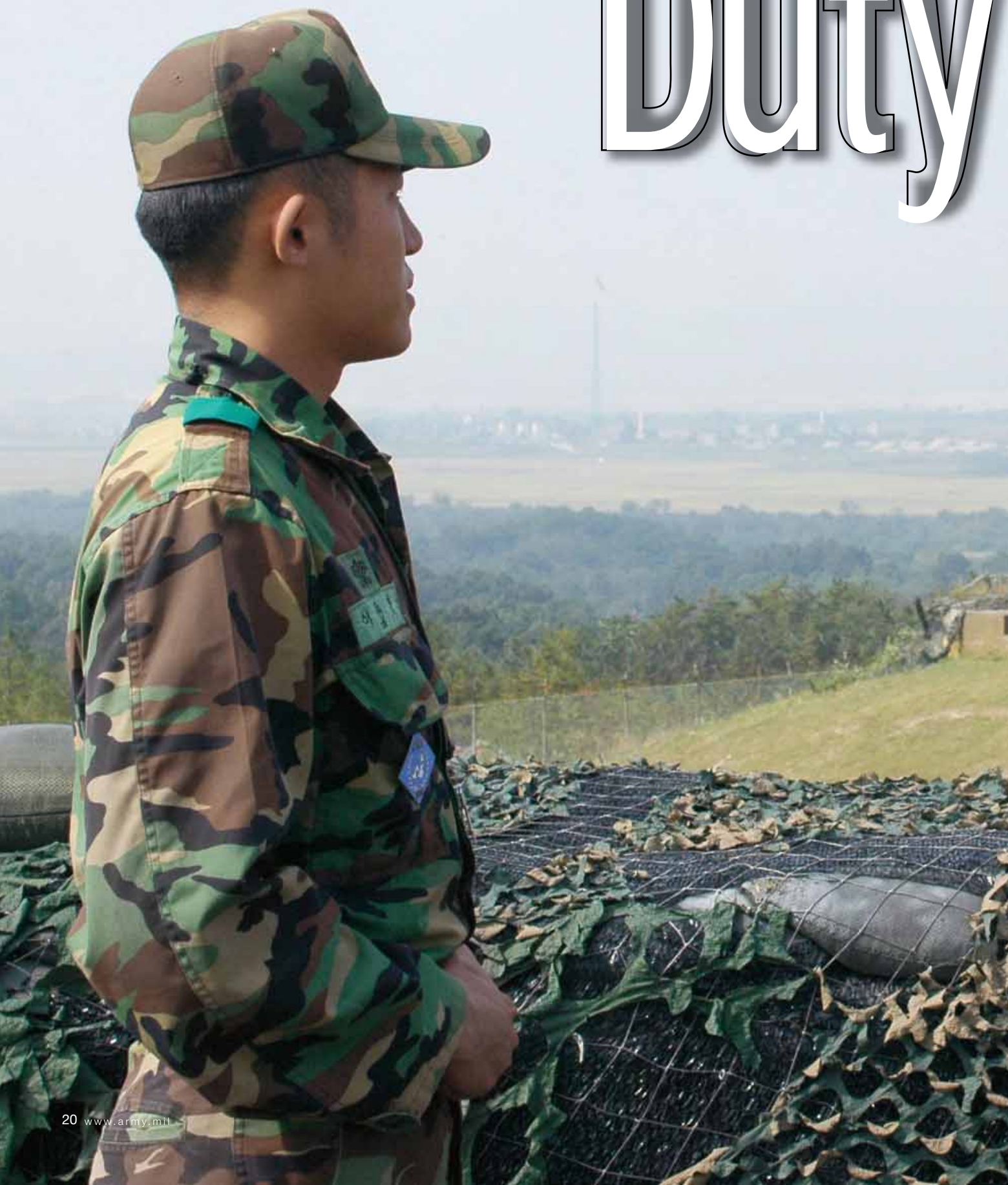
Once in the program, “KATUSAs undergo all the same training as their U.S. Army counterparts,” said Pionk.

“And the smart U.S. NCOs at Eighth Army learn fast that they can’t get things done as quickly or efficiently without their KATUSAs, who know their way around the country, and can help translate and make important introductions,” Pionk said.

When Park completes the program this spring he plans to return to college in Seoul to complete a degree in architecture. — *Heike Hasenauer*



Duty



on the DMZ

Story and Photos by Heike Hasenauer

THE closer travelers come to the border with communist North Korea, the more heavily fortified the area becomes.

Concertina wire runs for miles along the Han River, alongside the southbound shoulders of so-called “Freedom Highway,” which runs about 25 miles from Seoul to the border with North Korea. The highway passes miles of lime-green rice

paddies and Republic of Korea army guard towers, some of them painted in olive-drab camouflage patterns.

In contrast to the eerie reminders that an oppressed world is very close by, miles of purple and white wildflowers and orange marigolds form a sea of color in the highway’s median, providing an occasional diversion from armed guards and razor-sharp wire.

Nearing Camp Bonifas, home of

the United Nations Command Security Battalion, Joint Security Area at Panmunjom, or UNCSCB-JSA, fighting positions dot the grassy hills. False concrete overpasses, and bridges, the latter outfitted with expandable steel barriers and spike-topped drums, are part of an otherwise tranquil landscape.

Camp Bonifas — named for CPT Arthur G. Bonifas, the JSA officer killed in the infamous “Ax Murder

◀ Republic of Korea army Lt. Yongbin Lee scans the border between his country and North Korea from Guardpost Ouellette. The post is located on the heavily fortified edge of the demilitarized zone.

▶ MAJ José Devarona, the U.S. executive officer of the United Nations Command Security Battalion, looks toward the North Korean visitor center (the tall gray building at center) at the Joint Security Area.





Incident” in 1976 (see box on page 23) — is located just 400 meters south of the southern boundary of the Demilitarized Zone, the “most heavily armed border in the world,” according to U.S. military officials.

Before entering the JSA tour, visitors must sign a statement acknowledging that they understand “the ROK is not responsible for incidents that might occur, which could result in

injury or death. You will be entering a hostile area.”

Seventy percent of North Korea’s estimated 1.2-million active-duty ground troops are in offensive positions along the DMZ, Army officials said.

By comparison, the ROK army has about 40 percent of its 650,000-man force on the DMZ, manning more than 100 guard posts along the 151-mile-



▲ A sentry (above) stands guard at the ROK end of the “Bridge of No Return,” (main photo) which links North and South Korea.



long Military Demarcation Line.

The UNCSB-JSA, which is responsible for only a small portion of the DMZ, mans Observation Post Ouellette, 25 meters from the MDL. From there, the UNCSB-JSA observers can see 27 kilometers into North Korea, said UNCSB-JSA battalion executive officer MAJ Jose Devarona. “We have a platoon-size security force at this location 24/7.”

The UNCSB-JSA is composed of some 610 ROK soldiers — “the best of the ROK army,” Devarona said. Seventy-five percent of the ROK

◀ A ROK soldier scans the border from a lookout tower. Eighth U.S. Army officials estimate that some 70 percent of North Korea’s army is stationed along the DMZ.

soldiers at the JSA have two years of college. Eighty percent of them possess black belts in tae kwon do and have met the highest physical-fitness standards.

A quick-reaction force of ROK soldiers, located a short distance away, is always ready to provide reinforcements within minutes.

Forty-one U.S. Soldiers compose the headquarters that supports the battalion, Devarona said. The battalion is led by a U.S. lieutenant colonel and sergeant major, and the others serve as security guards and tour escorts, and perform administrative, communications and logistics functions.

"For every 45-person tour group, we send one person to perform the security role," Devarona said. "We also provide security for the residents of Taesong-dong, also known as 'Freedom Village.'"

The only authorized village in the U.N. Command portion of the DMZ, it is one of the most fertile areas in Korea for growing rice and ginseng, Devarona said. Located less than a mile southwest of the JSA, its inhabitants must be either original inhabitants or direct descendants of the villagers who were residing there when the 1953 armistice was signed.

Roughly 250 people live in the village. While the men are exempt from mandatory military service in the ROK, they're required to spend 240 nights in the village annually and live under curfew to retain their exempt status.

Since 1953, North and South Korea officials have met in the JSA at Panmunjom to resolve military, economic and political problems. Red Cross representatives, Olympic officials, economic advisors and military negotiators have convened meetings at the site in attempts to keep the peace and reunite the peninsula, Devarona said.


It's here, too, that U.S. and ROK

officials repatriate the remains of service members from the Korean War, and release each other's citizens. In 1968, the North Koreans released the crew of the USS *Pueblo*, and in 1970, 39 South Korean passengers of a hijacked Korean Airlines jet.

In 1953 prisoners of war from both sides chose whether or not to return to their places of origin when they crossed the "Bridge of No Return," located in the JSA.

Changing Roles

Several years ago, the U.S. military had a larger contingent on the DMZ; ROK soldiers composed 60 percent of the JSA battalion, U.S. Soldiers 40 percent.

As part of the Army's transformation, "the ROK army is gradually assuming a larger part of the mission," Devarona said. "Today, all my companies are made up of ROK soldiers, and we have a combined ROK and U.S. battalion staff. Eventually, the JSA mission will be an all-ROK army mission." 



▲ Forty-one U.S. Soldiers compose the Security Battalion's headquarters. Here, SSG Mark Fletcher checks the weapons inventory in the unit arms room.

Operation Paul Bunyan

THE heinous ax murders on the Demilitarized Zone in Korea occurred on Aug. 18, 1976, when a United Nations Joint Security Area work force tried to trim a tree that stood between two guard posts in the JSA.

The tree posed a security problem because it blocked the JSA Soldiers' views of critical areas near the "Bridge of No Return."

As the work force prepared to cut down the tree, North Korean reinforcements arrived on the scene. Suddenly they numbered 30 soldiers to the JSA's 10.

At one point, Lt. Pok Chol of the North Korean Peoples Army removed his watch and wrapped it in a handkerchief as a sign to kill the Americans, said Wayne Kirkbride, who was the adjutant to the personnel officer for the 2nd Infantry Division stationed at the DMZ at the time and who authored a book about the incident called "Operation Paul Bunyan: Story of a Grizzly Murder."

The commander of the JSA and one of his most experienced officers were hacked to death with the axes they'd brought to cut down the tree.

The next day officials moved tanks into position near the DMZ and infantrymen moved forward to a staging area in the JSA, according to Kirkbride.

U.S. engineers cut down the tree, under protection of Korean special-forces soldiers and infantrymen. — Heike Hasenauer



Special Ops



“T’S a country that time has forgotten,” said CSM Richard Kimmich of North Korea.

“I was in Afghanistan from January to August 2002 and in Iraq from March 2002 to August 2003,” said the current command sergeant major of Special Operations Command, Korea, known as SOCK-OR. “Now this command is fighting the Cold War against old Soviet- and Chinese-type doctrine.

“We have to be prepared for war 365 days a year, because we never

know when North Korean dictator Kim Jong-il will say, ‘We need to unify Korea today,’” Kimmich said.

If the North chooses to invade South Korea, there will be little warning, said Kimmich. If war breaks out, his 82-person headquarters would swell to some 500, with reinforcements from the Republic of Korea army, to form the Combined Unconventional Warfare Task Force.

North Korea has the fourth largest military forces in the world — some 1.2 million active-duty soldiers, more than 13,000 artillery systems and one of the largest submarine fleets in the world, according to U.S. State Department records.

“In 1991, when the United States and other nations were reducing the

size of their military forces, North Korea focused on building up its forces,” Kimmich said. In 1991, too, North Korea had 40 percent of its army positioned along the demilitarized zone some 25 miles north of South Korea’s capital, Seoul, and U.S. Forces, Korea’s Yongsan Garrison.

Today, 70 percent of the North Korean army is positioned along the DMZ, Kimmich said. And U.S. State Department reports indicate that the North “has perhaps the world’s second largest special-operations force, de-



▲ Though satellite images show North Korea as a “dark hole” compared to the brightly lit and vibrant South, the communist nation fields the fourth-largest army in the world.

◀ Frequent live-fire training ensures that U.S. special-operations forces remain constantly ready to repel any North Korean aggression.

in Korea

Story by Heike Hasenauer Photos courtesy U.S. Special Operations Command



signed for insertion behind the lines in wartime.”

Additionally, the reports reveal that “North Korean forces have a substantial numerical advantage over those of South Korea (between 2 and 3 to 1) in several key categories of offensive weapons — tanks, long-range artillery and armored personnel carriers.”

Ironically, nighttime satellite images of the divided peninsula show a bleak, black image of the North,

◀ SOCKOR Soldiers practice helicopter extraction during recent training.

▲ SOCKOR members prepare to ascend in a balloon during parachute training near the town of Uijeongbu.

which accommodates some 23 million people, versus a bright, vibrant image of South Korea, population about 48 million, Kimmich said.

To stay prepared for crises and war, SOCKOR participates in six training exercises annually with ROK Special Warfare Command forces, including a counterterrorist exercise that focuses on marksmanship training, said Eighth U.S. Army spokesman MAJ Jerome Pionk.

Two of the events involve all U.S. and ROK special-operations forces, said SGM Jack Hagan of the 39th Special Forces Detachment.

Attached to the 1st Special Forces Group, the 16 Soldiers in the detachment work at 11 locations on the Korean peninsula, Hagan said.

“U.S. special-forces Soldiers have been training ROK soldiers for 48 years, so we no longer concentrate on basic Soldier skills. Most of the training we conduct is concentrated on

◀ Given that North Korean infiltrators often try to enter South Korea by boat, U.S. and ROK counter-terrorism units also frequently practice shipboard security operations.



advanced skills and interoperability,” he said.

It includes courses such as fast-rope master, jumpmaster, combat dive supervisor, water infiltration, over-the-horizon navigation, tactical air control, military free fall and airfield seizure, among others.

“As liaisons to ROK special-forces units, we teach their teams to call in U.S. strike aircraft and coordinate for other U.S. assets, such as Army night aviation and intelligence,” Hagan added.


Recently, ROK SF soldiers parachuted onto an airfield at low altitude at night and took control of the runway, allowing mock follow-on forces to come in within 30 minutes. “That was significant, because it was something they hadn’t previously done,” Hagan said.

The SF Soldiers, master sergeants who serve as advisers to ROK army generals, trained approximately 1,000 ROK SF soldiers last year, Hagan said, using the “train-the-trainer” technique.

“We’ve maintained a legacy with Korean special forces, who supported us immediately after the Korean War, in Vietnam and now in Iraq,” said BG Simeon Trombitas, SOCKOR’s commander.

“As we learn lessons from our combat experiences, we share those with the Korean army. And we train them on changing systems,” Trombitas said.

“The July 2006 missile launches and the October underground nuclear-weapon test by North Korea further demonstrate the need for the U.S. military presence in South Korea as a deterrent on the peninsula,” he added.

“The U.S. and ROK special operations soldiers are at their highest level of proficiency. I have no doubts that they’re ready to do their nations’ bidding,” Trombitas concluded. 



▼ A CH-47 Chinook drops SOCKOR Soldiers into the sea during covert-infiltration training. Army aircraft play a vital role in the organization’s activities throughout its area of operations.



Practicing an Immediate Response

Story by Gary L. Kieffer and
SPCs Andrew Orillion and
Tanya Polk



THE Nove Selo training area in central Bulgaria was the scene of an important tri-national exercise dubbed Immediate Response '06.

Units from the U.S. 1st Armored Division, the Romanian 21st Infantry Regiment and the Bulgarian 61st Stryama Mechanized Brigade combined to support U.S. Army, Europe's theater-engagement program, which increases NATO interoperability through combined exercises among partner nations.

Exercise officials said the twin themes of the exercise—which also included maneuvers in Romania—were realism and cooperation.

"Immediate Response's main objective was to improve our training and to participate in joint coalition operations," said Bulgarian Col. Biser Petrov, the exercise's co-director.

Gary Kieffer is assigned to the U.S. Army, Europe, Public Affairs Office. SPCs Andrew Orillion and Tanya Polk are assigned to the 1st Armored Division Public Affairs Office.

"Interoperability with NATO forces is of paramount importance for us."

U.S., Bulgarian and Romanian troops formed three platoons, built from one squad from each country. A commander from yet another participating country led each platoon.

"Training events were the catalyst of IR '06," said LTC Jenks Reid, a senior task force observer-controller from the Joint Multinational Readiness Center at Hohenfels, Germany.

"This was team building with new allies, cementing trust and cooperation, setting the stage for the near future. This is a building block of USAREUR's joint perspective," Reid said.

COL James D. Shumway, exercise co-director and commander of the 1st Armored Division Engineer Brigade, agreed.

"Clearly, this was about interaction of our forces," he said. "With USAREUR anticipating additional exercises with our partners, we're working from a framework of the past to develop training for the future."

Gary L. Kieffer



▲ Bulgarian and American soldiers man a Bulgarian BMP-1 tracked armored troop carrier during military operations in urban terrain training at Novo Selo.

Partnership training for IR '06 kicked off with a weapons-familiarization exchange. The Soldiers trained their NATO counterparts on common U.S. weaponry, including the M-9



▲ American UH-60 Black Hawks move away from a landing zone after dropping a mixed squad of U.S. and Bulgarian troops.
SPC Tanya Polk



Gary L. Kieffer (both)



▲ A local Bulgarian member of Novo Selo's Civilians on the Battlefield program plays the role of a villager during a training event.

◀ A Bulgarian soldier scans the battlefield in front of him with his RPG-7 rocket-propelled-grenade launcher as other troops prepare to assault a building in the MOUT area.

pistol, M-16 assault rifle, the M-240B medium machine gun and M-249 machine guns, and the Mk. 19 grenade machine gun.

Conversely, the eastern Europeans educated their U.S. counterparts on the AK-47 assault rifle, the PKM general-purpose machine gun and the RPK machine gun.

"It was a unity-building event to exchange and fire weapons," said ILT

Caleb McKeel of the 1st Armd. Div.'s 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment. "It's not so much about marksmanship; it's more about cohesiveness."

Other training during the exercise included military operations in urban terrain, convoy maneuvers, an air-assault mission and a raid on a "hostile village."

With a trio of armies that contrib-

uted an assortment of military strategies, planners took a "crawl-walk-run" approach to training, said JMRC observer-controller SFC Anthony Coulantuono.

In the initial phase of training, Soldiers used engineer tape to represent the outline of a building. After practicing their movements into the "building" as a team they underwent training in actual buildings.

"Even though participants were from three countries, they performed as if they have always worked together," said SFC Matthew Creamer, a JMRC observer-controller.

The training continued in multi-room buildings, complete with obstacles and friendly and hostile occupants.

"This is some of the best training we can do," Todoranov said. "It teaches soldiers how to move and react."

Using DISE

To ensure the troops responded as if every movement mattered, the 43 JMRC members brought along

► The lead vehicle in a convoy of U.S., Bulgarian and Romanian troops is "hit" by a simulated improvised explosive device during an ambush training exercise.

an exercise tool that puts troops on the front line. It's called the Deployable Instrumentation System, Europe, a technology based on the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System, which detects when a Soldier has been targeted and "hit" by a laser-fitted weapon. But while MILES simply lets users know they have gone from combatant to casualty, DISE displays how they were "killed" or "wounded," and why.

Moreover, "it brings war simulation to a new level," said SGT Joshua Thurman of the Joint Multinational Training Command, JMRC's higher headquarters.

DISE gear is so realistic that Soldiers at IR '06 performed the same loading and firing steps they would use on an M-16 rifle or M-9 pistol. Even the effective range of each weapon in the DISE system is identical to the real thing.

"We can bring anything into play, from small arms to a Paladin self-propelled howitzer, and from rotary-wing aircraft to the Multiple Launch Rocket System," Thurman said. "There is almost nothing we can't simulate with this system."

With DISE, Soldiers wear a vest equipped with sensors and two built-in speakers that sound when the wearer is "hit." An audio cue gives the wearer one of seven different wound statuses, or even a near-miss ping. DISE allows observers to track battlefield action and to recount how

players move and react. It builds skills and confidence, officials said.

"With this system, we lift the fog of war by showing Soldiers what really happened," Thurman said. "When you get down to it, this training saves lives."

JMRC SUPPORT

During IR '06, Eisch and other JMRC observer-controllers helped guide training as it unfolded.

"We identified weaknesses and offered corrective steps," Eisch said. "We showed people how to capitalize on their strengths. It's the little things that can get you killed in combat, and we want people to recognize that."

While training the platoons, controllers assisted commanders in developing unit cohesion and mutual understanding through scenarios and role-playing.

For example, 1st AD artillerymen became infantrymen at Novo Selo as they pulled convoy operations, raided an "enemy-held" village, practiced quick-reaction force techniques and joined Romanian and Bulgarian sol-

diers in a MOUT exercise. And as in war, strategy and tactics changed on the fly.

Led by Romanian Lt. Constantin Paraschivu, 2nd Platoon was charged with assaulting an occupied building located in a small village. A drawn-out plan had the team walking a ridgeline, using terrain to mask their movements. But time constraints forced a faster alternative. Paraschivu's crew boarded Humvees and a Bulgarian BMP fighting vehicle to move troops to the stronghold and take it out.

On the last day of the exercise the mission was to fly by helicopter from Bulgaria into Romania to capture a suspected "terrorist."

Three UH-60 Black Hawks flew the combined force platoons to their objective. Within 15 minutes of landing, the troops captured the "terrorist" and secured the area.

"This was training based on the principles of democracy," Romanian Lt. Col. Iuri Tanase, exercise co-director said of the overall approach to training. "We all worked hard, focusing our energies on combat skills and interoperability. We learned we can work together successfully on the battlefield."

"Soldiers have a common language," Elliot said. "Our tactics, uniforms and weapons are slightly different," he said of the allied armies, "but Immediate Response '06 gave us the opportunity to experience those differences and appreciate them." ■



► A Bulgarian BMP-1 armored personnel carrier leads a Humvee and other vehicles in the assault on a suspected "terrorist" base at the Novo Selo MOUT site.

BEFORE CPT Paul Olsen completed his first tour in Iraq as commander of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, his wife, Erin, contemplated what life was like before her husband's most recent deployment; the couple had spent two of the past three years living on different continents.

Erin said she spent time wondering where he was, what he was doing, and whether he was thinking of her and the baby they were expecting.

"Being married to a Soldier at war is difficult," Erin said. But today she recognizes her relationship has reached a level many Army marriages don't.

"I've seen many marriages fall apart due to the stress that deployments put on Soldiers and their families," she said. "Life in the Army is hard, and you have to be truly committed to the other person and the life you've built together in order for it to last."

Statistics provided by the Army chief of chaplains indicate that 8,367 Army couples divorced in 2005, making the Army's divorce rate higher than that of any other military service.

Given that fact, Army leaders are introducing new initiatives to help reduce divorce rates, improve mission readiness and enhance Soldier well-being.

"The Army has launched a tremendous number of family support programs since the war began," said LTC Peter J. Frederich, family ministries

officer for the office of the Army Chief of Chaplains.

"Strong Bonds," a proactive and holistic marriage initiative, is among those. It provides guidance to single Soldiers, married couples, families and those facing deployment in order to stem potential problems.

"Strong Bonds is different from anything we've tried before, because it isn't a counseling program," said Frederich. "Counseling means something is wrong and we're going to fix it. This is more of a pre-emptive education initiative."

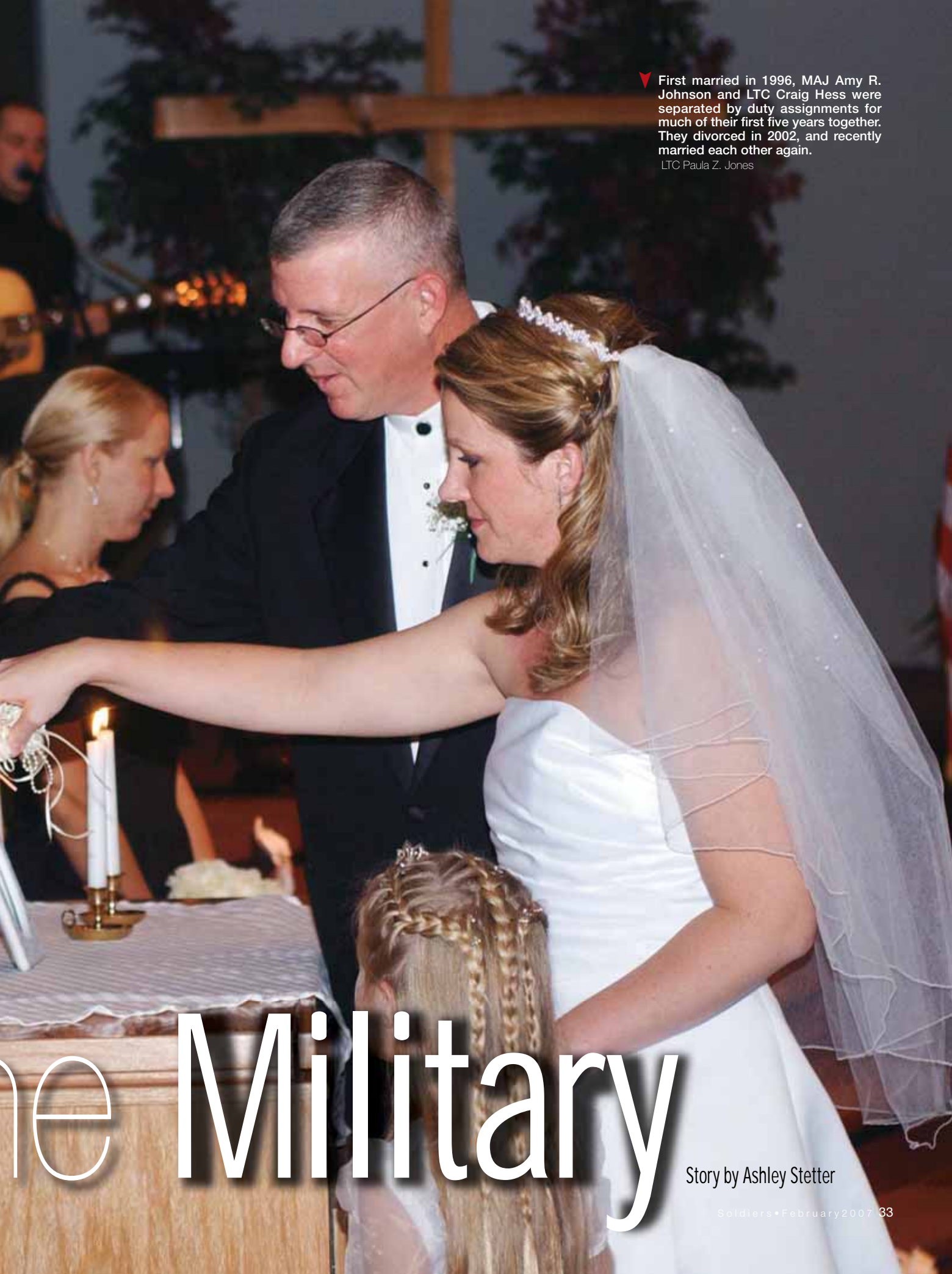
Strong Bonds is unit-based and calls upon commanders to provide adequate time on their training calendars to allow chaplains to come in and

administer program training.

So far, survey results of the program have been positive. Couples who complete it "show marked improvement in skills and habits that lead to increased marriage satisfaction and survival," said Frederich. Additionally, the study reveals that "more than 90 percent of those who participated in Strong Bonds reported that the program was helpful and appreciated."

Ashley Stetter is an intern in the Public Affairs Office, Army Chief of Public Affairs at the Pentagon.

Marriage in the



▼ First married in 1996, MAJ Amy R. Johnson and LTC Craig Hess were separated by duty assignments for much of their first five years together. They divorced in 2002, and recently married each other again.

LTC Paula Z. Jones

the Military

Story by Ashley Stetter

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“Military One Source” is another beneficial marriage-related program. It provides online consultants, articles, educational materials and other interactive tools to the military community every day, year-round.

Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy John M. Molino told the American Forces Press Service that “Military One Source is a revo-

lutionary augmentation to the family services we currently have on military installations around the world. It leverages technology and enables the Department of Defense to provide assistance to families and service members via the Internet or toll-free telephone numbers.”

Programs like Military One Source and Strong Bonds seem to be having a significant impact on divorce statistics.

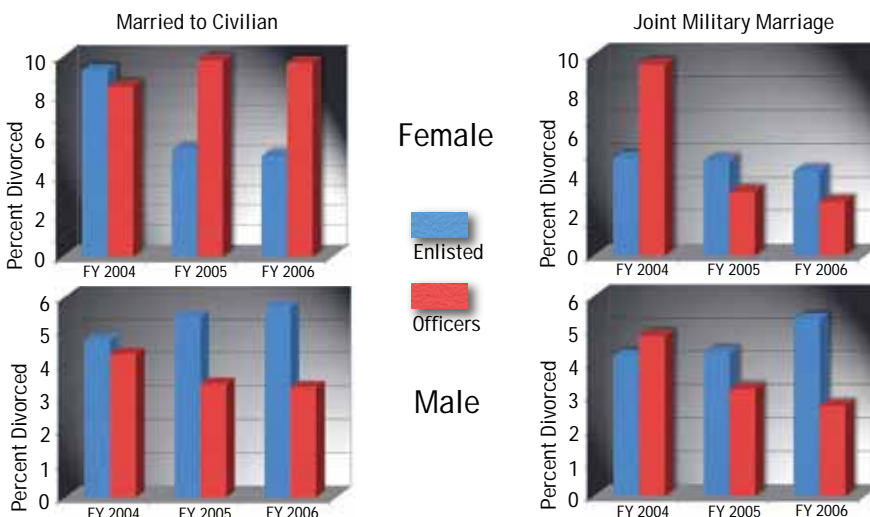
▲ Army couples seal their commitment with a kiss following a marriage renewal ceremony at a Strong Bonds retreat. Programs like Strong Bonds have a significant impact on military divorce statistics.

The number of Army marriages that ended in divorce when the war began in 2003 was 2.8 percent. While that number spiked to 3.9 percent in 2004, Frederick said the percentage has declined ever since and is currently less than 3.3 percent.

CPT Patrick M. Gordon, who returned from Iraq in November 2006, said that while programs are helpful, Soldiers must take the first step toward maintaining a strong marriage.

“Preparation is the key,” said Gordon, who has been married and in the military for seven years. “You must prepare the family for success.”

Gordon and his wife Michelle, who is pregnant with their first child, encourage all couples facing deployment to practice communication, mutual respect and understanding well



FY04 - FY06 Active Duty Army Divorce Rates by Marriage Type

"In the long run, it's all about communication, compromise and commitment. So long as both partners remember that and constantly work toward it, a marriage will stay strong."

before the deployment.

"I think you have to make sure that your spouse is prepared for deployment just like you are," Gordon said. "Several months before I deployed, I made sure that we had a plan to cover all the angles. I think a lot of Soldiers take off and leave their spouses unprepared to deal with issues, and this can cause grief for the Soldiers, the chains of command and the spouses."

MAJ Amy R. Johnson, who divorced her husband LTC Craig Hess in 2002 and remarried him this year, said she feared the stigma of seeking help when she experienced problems with him.

The officers married in 1996 and were separated for much of their first five years together. As much as they wanted their relationship to work, pressures of increasing job responsibilities, twins and long-term separations quickly wore on the couple's relationship.

"We worked in an environment where many dual-military couples worked, and it was clear that we were not the only ones struggling with these issues," Johnson said.

While Johnson didn't have access to programs like Strong Bonds, she came to understand the fundamentals of military marriage when Hess deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in the fall of 2004.

"I was so sad for our children that, once again, they were going to be without a parent," Johnson said. "I vowed to Craig that I would do anything I possibly could to keep him as close to the twins as possible. Months passed, and I started to realize that the exchanges we had contained more depth."

The deployment, which came three years after the couple separated, taught the Johnsons the importance of communication and ultimately led them to remarry in November 2006, 10 years after they were first married.

"I could speak volumes on the exchanges we had over the year he was deployed — how we came closer together in spite of the distance, the pure communication in our e-mails and letters, the true honesty and depths we reached in our brief phone conversations. Those are what we leaned on to not only get us through his year of deployment, but to reestablish our relationship," Johnson said.

"My unit performed above anyone's hopes and desires, but the most successful part of my deployment was returning home to Amy, the children and a loving relationship that is stronger than it ever has been," said Hess.


New Army initiatives reinforce this deep communication and supplant former reactive programs that caused couples that needed help to hesitate in seeking it for fear of reprisal.

"The military is doing better in providing services," Johnson said. "Now we need to take it to the next step and encourage Soldiers to use them. It is imperative that an environment exists in which commanders are supportive of using the services, and will remain supportive while the services are being used."

"We are here to support. Right now, we are looking great. Our

divorce rates are below the national average and that is in spite of the fact that we are distressed at a much greater average," Frederick said. "Our Soldiers continue to do meaningful work, and we will continue to provide them with the world's best care and programs."

Successful military couples like Amy and Craig Hess, Michelle and Patrick Gordon, and Erin and Paul Olsen encourage Soldiers to take advantage of the wealth of opportunities the Army offers.

"Too many people lack the skills to communicate and listen to each other, and they expect the initial rush of romantic emotions to carry them through a deployment," said Paul Olsen. "In the long run, it's all about communication, compromise and commitment. So long as both partners remember that and constantly work toward it, a marriage will stay strong." 

➤ **Maintaining a successful military marriage takes love, respect, commitment and perseverance, couples say, as well as healthy doses of patience, good humor and selflessness.**



WEB OPSEC

Protecting Soldier's Security

Story by MAJ Pam Newbern

WHETHER or not “Big Brother” is watching you is debatable. But 10 members of a National Guard unit in Virginia very well might be.

The Manassas-based Virginia Data Processing Unit activated a team in July for a year-long effort to monitor official and unofficial Army Web sites for operational security violations.

The team works under the direction of the Army Web Risk Assessment Cell in the Army's Office of Information Assurance and Compliance. When the monitors find documents, pictures and other items that may compromise security, they notify the offending webmasters or blog writ-

ers. Among the OPSEC violations discovered by AWRAC scans of official Web pages were a list of the sites of secret safes on a military base, and a site which gave specific information on missiles, including frequencies, locations and dimensions.

The team, headed by LTC Stephen Warnock, uses several scanning tools to monitor sites for OPSEC violations. The tool looks for key words, such as “for official use only,” or “top secret,” and records the number of times they are used on a site. Analysts review the results to determine which, if any, need further investigation.

For the 10 Virginia Guard Soldiers the mission often becomes personal.

“I have friends in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan,” said SGT Yaphet Benton, a network technician in civilian life. “Once I started this mission, I saw a lot of things that can endanger a lot of Soldiers.

I see a lot of bios, pictures and names — a lot of birthdates. I consider that critical. Terrorists and persons trying to steal identities can use that in the States.”

AWRAC, based in Arlington, Va., has existed since 2002, when it was created to monitor official Web sites. Its mission was expanded in August 2005 by order of the Army chief of staff to include unofficial sites produced by service members.

Warnock, who is also the battalion commander of the Manassas unit, said his team consists of both Reservists and active-duty Soldiers.

Besides working with the Manassas unit, AWRAC works with members of the Guard and Reserve from Washington State, Texas and Maryland.

“I see this expanding considerably with the communications tools that are out there now,” said SFC Irwin Walters, a personnel specialist with the Manassas unit. “I have special concerns about Soldiers leaving their families vulnerable. They are giving up too much information that we know terrorists are capable of exploiting.

“I think it's great that Soldiers have an opportunity to blow off steam and express themselves, but I have a real concern about the amount of information that is being put out there,” he added.

When a team member finds an item he believes to be sensitive, he

MAJ Pam Newbern is a Signal Corps officer assigned to Fort Meade, Md.



◀ The members of the Manassas-based Virginia Data Processing Unit are engaged in a year-long effort to monitor official and unofficial Army Web sites for security violations.



marks it for further investigation. Another team member will review the item and determine if the webmaster or blog writer should be notified. Most notifications are made by e-mail, and the person responsible is given a few days to respond, depending on the level of potential security compromise. In some cases, such as when secret documents are found, the site owner is notified immediately by phone. Most Soldiers respond positively, but some cannot be identified by name or by unit. Official sites are contacted through the webmaster or, in some cases, the unit's chain of command.

The most commonly found items on official sites are "For Official Use Only" or limited-distribution documents that have been put on publicly accessible sites. Other items include personal information, such as birth dates or home addresses and phone numbers.

Unofficial blogs often show pictures with sensitive information in the background, including classified documents, weapons or entrances to camps. One Soldier showed his ammo belt, on which the tracer pattern was easily identifiable.

Although AWRAC contacts Soldiers who write unofficial blogs, the team does not review e-mail or sites that cannot be accessed publicly. Team members identify themselves as AWRAC representatives and work with a legal counsel to ensure their actions adhere to law and Army regulations.

Members of the DPU bring a variety of specialized skills to the job. Some, like Walters, have extensive technological backgrounds. Others, like SPC Shane Newell, are newer to the field, but no less dedicated.

"It's a good opportunity to get some real-world experience," said Newell, a former member of the 3rd U.S. Infantry, The Old Guard.

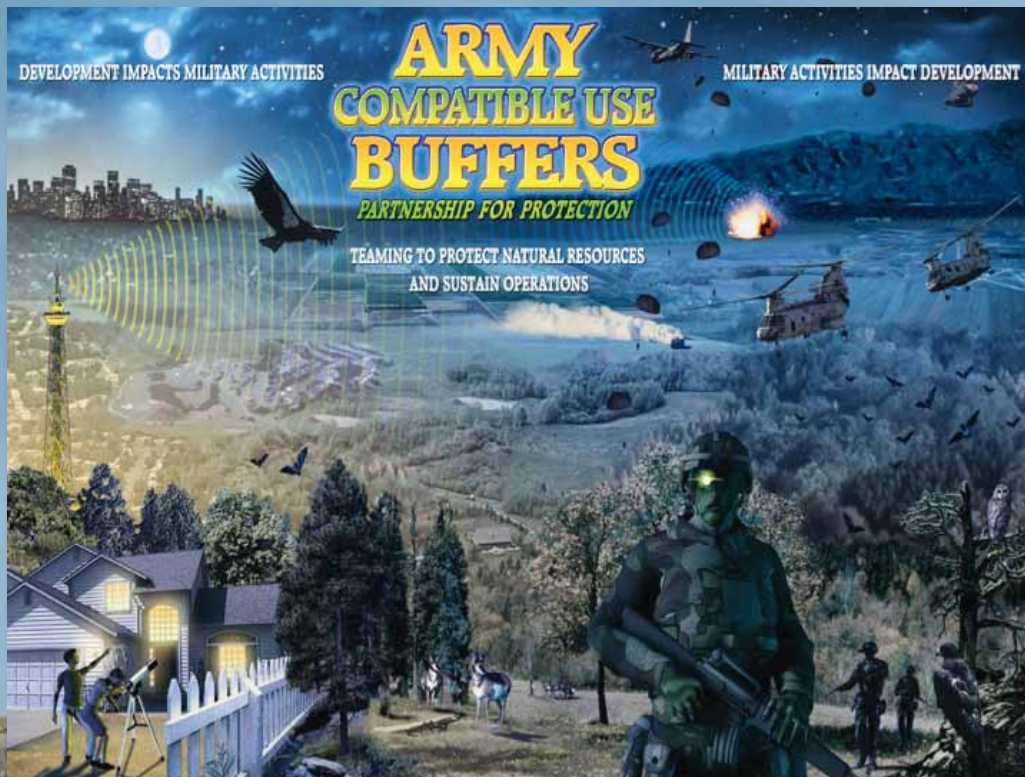
Benton agreed, saying he had accepted the mission in an effort to gain greater technical experience. "It's also a way to contribute to the war on terrorism."

For SFC Lonny Paschal, the mission reminds him of his time in the Middle East.

▲ Network technicians monitor sites for such key words as "official use only" and "top secret." Analysts then determine which sites need further investigation.

"I was a contractor in Iraq, and I would see Soldiers coming back with pictures of their compounds or weapons," he said. "I would tell them, 'You can't publish that. You're compromising yourself and your fellow Soldiers.' I do believe that we are saving lives in the long run here." 🇺🇸

For more on AWRAC,
or to request a courtesy
scan of a blog, go to the
team's Web site on Army
Knowledge Online at
[https://www.us.army.mil/
suite/portal.do?p=254224](https://www.us.army.mil/suite/portal.do?p=254224).



Preserving Tra

THE Mk. 83 bomb weighs 1,000 pounds. When it hits the ground it excavates a crater 20 feet wide and rattles windows miles away.

It's the kind of weapon Soldiers might call on to soften up an enemy during a real battle. So the Navy likes to bring Mk. 83s when Fort Sill, Okla., hosts joint-service, close-air-support training. These live-fire exercises can involve artillery and infantry, Air Force and Navy fliers and, occasionally, Marines. They fire multiple-launch rocket systems and cannon, adding to the realism.

The impact areas and maneuver ranges on Fort Sill have few neigh-

LTC Knott is the program manager for the Army Compatible Use Buffer Program.

bors to annoy or endanger, but to the south, the state's fourth largest city, Lawton, is growing. Until recently, training managers on the installation looked to the future with concern.

"A lot of our firing points are along the perimeter of the training area, so that noise would transfer into the surrounding community," said Randall Butler, public works director at Fort Sill.

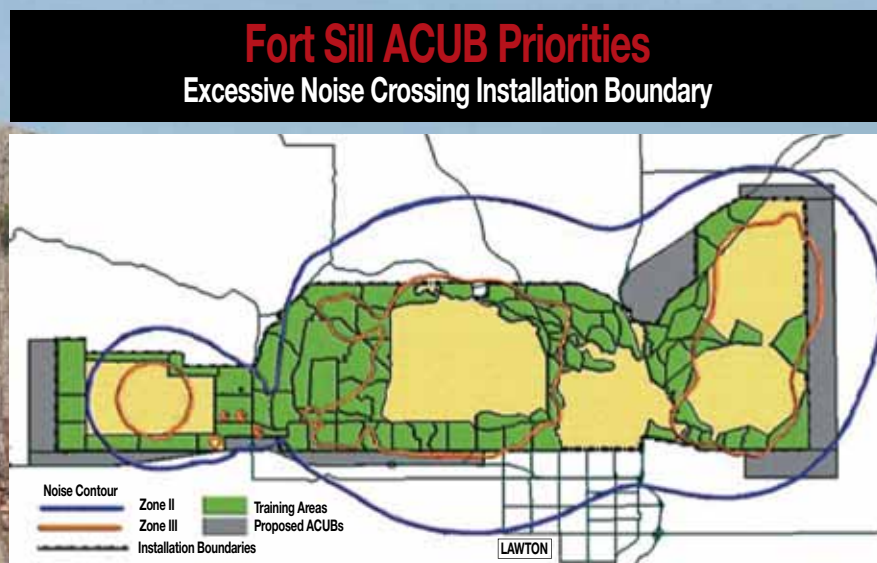
So Fort Sill wants to put approximately 20,000 acres between its field artillery training areas and the growing communities of Lawton and Cache. To make it possible, the post became one of 16 installations turning to the Army Compatible Use Buffer program.

ACUB exists to help prevent subdivisions, schools and other

development — that could be endangered by military training or testing — from springing up across from active ranges. Installations work with government and private organizations to find owners willing to sell their land or, more often, easements — giving up the right to do some things with their property.

With easements, "the landowners maintain the land, grow crops on it, run livestock, whatever they want to do, with the exception of developing a subdivision of houses in the buffer zone," said Craig Phillips, chief of the Conservation and Restoration Branch at Fort Riley, Kan.

It's a new way to do business. The Army provides some of the money and helps craft the agreement. Though



ining Grounds

Story by LTC Joseph Knott



Fort Sill plans to put approximately 20,000 acres between its field artillery training areas — where this Soldier is about to fire his howitzer — and the communities of Lawton and Cache.

training for generations of Soldiers. So far, these buffers cover almost 55,000 acres, protecting 10 Army installations. Expect to see at least six more forts with ACUB plans within the year, Army officials said.

A buffer usually protects more than Soldier training and weapon testing. Around Fort Riley, like many other installations, the issue is wild-life habitat. New communities use up open space, and neighboring installations become refuges for threatened or endangered species, more than 180 at last count.

As part of the Army's transformation, Fort Riley will grow by 20,000 Soldiers. This expansion will force other residents of Kansas' disappearing tallgrass prairie to compete with population growth outside the fort. If the regal fritillary butterfly and other species move onto the endangered species list, Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division and the three brigade combat teams could face summertime live-fire

buffers come in many forms, there are two unbreakable rules: The landowner must be willing to sell, and the Army cannot own the property or easement. It will belong, instead, to a partner — a state or local agency, or a nonprofit organization. Nationwide partners include The Nature Conservancy, Ducks

Unlimited and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"The Army is not wanting to purchase more land to train on," said Jeff Keating, ACUB manager for Fort Riley. "It simply wants to maximize the use of the land we already own and minimize impact to surrounding properties."

Installations use buffers as part of an overall plan to sustain realistic

The owner of the Ryder Ranch, on Fort Sill's southern perimeter, signed the installation's first Army Compatible Use Buffer agreement.

Kristen Miller (both this page)



► Waimea Falls on the Hawaiian island of Oahu is preserved and protected by the ACUB covering the Army's Kahuku Training Area.

restrictions. And while a full Stryker brigade combat team on maneuvers needs almost 70,000 acres on an installation, cross-country vehicle traffic could be barred from potential breeding areas.

The Army has endured this kind of restriction for more than 20 years. The ACUB office at the Pentagon knows of eight-day convoy missions cut into segments lasting 14 days because of noise and dust complaints by community leaders, and digital firing ranges have been closed because half-million-dollar homes were built just on the other side of the fence line.

Fort Riley and Fort Sill didn't wait for restrictions. Instead, the installations put together a team of private and public organizations to create habitat outside the installation. Off-post habitat relieves the Army from primary caregiver duty. Other partners are willing to take on that mantle, and ACUB makes it possible.

For Fort Riley, those partners include the Kansas Land Trust, a conservation organization, and NRCS. This marks the first time NRCS will put money into an Army buffer.

Sustaining ranches is another issue affecting Fort Riley. It also drives the partnership around Fort Sill. Oklahoma rancher A.J. Ryder became the first owner to sign on to the Fort Sill ACUB in July. He sold a conservation easement for his 300-acre spread to Fort Sill's ACUB partner, Land Legacy of Tulsa, Okla. The Army, NRCS, and county and state governments helped Land Legacy make the purchase.

Ryder said he wanted to support the nation's war efforts while protect-

ing his land from private developers.

"They don't know what's going to happen in the future of the military — whether the artillery is going to be any larger or what — and they just want a buffer zone around it, which is good for me," he said.

The realistic conditions on live-fire ranges remain the most effective way of transferring the lessons of the battlefield to the next generation of Soldiers.

"As quickly as we come up with new tactics, the enemy is studying those tactics so they can counterattack," said

SSG John Lee, an observer-controller on Fort Sill who helps train reserve-component Soldiers for deployment.

"The Army is not wanting to purchase more land to train on. It simply wants to maximize the use of the land we already own and minimize the impact to surrounding properties."




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MC2 Richard J. Brunson

► By helping preserve the Kahuku Training Area, the ACUB ensures both necessary training sites for service members such as this Marine, while also protecting terrain and wildlife.

Soldiers need to practice with live ammunition to closely simulate what they will experience in combat, Lee said.

"The most realistic training you can get is what you need. Over in Iraq and Afghanistan, Soldiers will not have observer-controllers watching over their shoulders. What they do in various situations is going to be their call," he said. 

“BREAKTHROUGH” VACCINE FOR WOMEN

FEMALE patients at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., can get vaccinated against certain subtypes of the virus that can lead to cervical cancer.

Walter Reed is one of the first military hospitals to use a U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved “breakthrough” vaccine that can be administered to individuals from 11 to 26 years of age to protect them against various types of the human papilloma virus.

— *Army News Service*



NEW INTERROGATION MANUAL RELEASED

THE Army recently announced the publication of Field Manual 2-22.3, “Human Intelligence Collector Operations,” to replace FM 34-52. The new field manual is broader in scope, clarifying military intelligence, military police roles and responsibilities, and humane detainee treatment.

— *ARNEWS*

FUTURE FORCE WARRIOR ACHIEVES MILESTONE

THE Army’s Future Force Warrior system is closer to being fielded as the Ground Soldier System, following a successful demonstration of its electronic networking capability.

Developed and managed by the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Center with General Dynamics C4 Systems, FFW is the Army’s flagship science-and-technology program, aimed at integrating “best-in-class” technologies from the Army’s Research, Development, and Engineering Command enterprise. — *ARNEWS*



Personnel

OPMS REALIGNS

THE Army's Officer Personnel Management System will align branches and functional areas under three new functional categories: Maneuver, Fires and Effects; Operations Support; and Force Sustainment, which includes the special branches.

Functional categories are further divided into functional groups that link branches and functional areas with similar battlefield functions. Human Resource Command will announce procedural changes for officer evaluations and functional designation boards via military personnel messages. — *ARNEWS*

Employment

ASEP HELPS SPOUSES FIND JOBS

THE Army Spouses Employment Partnership program helps military spouses establish and maintain careers wherever the Army sends them. The partnership between the Army and 21 Fortune 500 companies offers a spectrum of career opportunities for Army spouses.

Military spouses can apply for jobs online through the Army Spouse Employment Partnership at www.myarmylifetoo.com or www.militaryspousejobsearch.org, or by calling (803) 751-5432. — *ARNEWS*



TRICARE

DEERS FOR NEWBORNS AND ADOPTEES

IT'S important to register newborns and adoptees in DEERS to establish TRICARE eligibility for well-baby and pediatric health care, and to avoid potential claims problems.

TRICARE covers newborns and adoptees and pre-adoptees as long as another family member is enrolled in TRICARE Prime. TRICARE Prime covers newborns for 60 days from their birthdates; adopted children for 60 days, beginning from the effective date of the actual adoption; and pre-adoptive children for 60 days beginning on the date of placement by the court or approved adoption agency.

To continue Prime coverage past the first 60 days, you must enroll your newborn or adoptee in either TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Prime Remote for Active-Duty Family Members within 60 days. On the 61st day and after, if your child isn't enrolled in Prime or TPRADFM, TRICARE processes all future claims under Standard (at higher costs) until you enroll the child in Prime or TPRADFM. Children lose all TRICARE eligibility 365 days after birth or adoption unless they are registered in DEERS.

To apply for your child's Social Security number, visit the Social Security Administration Web site) or call (800) 772-1213. Once you receive your child's Social Security number, go to an identification card-issuing facility to update the DEERS information. — *TRICARE PAO*



For more TRICARE information, visit www.tricare.osd.mil/Factsheets/viewfact-sheet.cfm?id=127.



AKO IMPROVES SEARCH CAPABILITIES

A NEW, more powerful "search" option offered through Army Knowledge Online is easier to use and provides more relevant results.

The new option allows users to search all contents at once. Users can choose "Select All" and get all relevant results.

Another addition includes "AKO Recommends," a new keyword search that displays results from areas and sites most visited by AKO users. Eighty percent of the top 500 hits on AKO were for personal use, such as MyPay, ERB, OPMF and safety.

For more information go to www.us.army.mil and click on "Search Upgrade Overview." — **ARNEWS**



MC4 OPENS NEW EUCOM SITE SUPPORT

MEDICAL Communications for Combat Casualty Care, or MC4, opened its new European Support Site in Miesau, Germany, to train, field and support European Command-based Army units deploying to operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

MC4 integrates, fields and supports a medical-information management system for Army tactical medical forces, enabling a comprehensive, lifelong electronic medical record for service members, and enhancing medical situational awareness.

Headquartered at Fort Detrick, Md., MC4 is under the Army Program Executive Office, Enterprise Information Systems, at Fort Belvoir, Va. — **ARNEWS**



For more information, visit www.mc4.army.mil.



NEW PAY, PERSONNEL SYSTEM

THE Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System, or DIMHRS, will integrate the Army and Air Force pay and personnel systems into one Web-based system.

DIMHRS will be accessible from anywhere with a Common Access Card, and will be a one-stop shop for service members with pay and personnel issues. Users will be able to view their entire record, and even make certain changes themselves.

The Army will launch DIMHRS in March 2008, followed by the Air Force later that summer.

When DIMHRS is launched, service members can go to any military installation and get their pay or personnel issues resolved.

The Army and Air Force will start teaching DIMHRS at their personnel and finance schools in 2007. When the system is launched, the active, Guard and reserve components of the Army and Air Force will all be included at the same time. — **ARNEWS**





HOUSING RATES GET BOOST

SERVICE members received an average 3.5-percent boost in January in their 2007 basic allowance for housing compensation benefits.

The Department of Defense said military housing allowances are computed according to three key criteria — median current market rent; average utilities, including electricity, heat and water/sewer costs; and average renter's insurance.

BAH rates also are based on dwelling type and number of bedrooms in a given area, and then calculated for each pay grade, both with and without family members.

For personnel with family members, average increases in the BAH are approximately \$44 per month. For example, a typical specialist or corporal will receive about \$34 more in BAH than in 2006, while a master sergeant or first sergeant will receive about \$42 more than this year. — *ARNEWS*

Army Knowledge

NEW EXTENDED-COLD-WEATHER GEAR

THE new Generation III Extended Cold Weather Clothing System adopts the latest insulating and wicking materials for Soldiers operating in demanding arctic conditions, and the system is designed to work in extremely cold weather, Army officials said.

The new ECWCS gear has 12 components that can be mixed and matched depending on the conditions and how active a Soldier is.

The system begins with long underwear that's made of lightweight, moisture-wicking polyester designed to keep the wearer dry. The mid-weight shirt and pants provide light insulation during warmer days, and an extra layer can be added in colder conditions.

A lightweight, waterproof windbreaker or a breathable soft shell set are available for cold, rainy ways. During the coldest days, troops can add a puffy, extreme-cold-weather parka with high-tech insulation quilted into it and matching pants that zip over other layers in the system.

The new ECWCS gear is slated for initial fielding to the Army in about a year, but the 49th Missile Defense Battalion in Alaska and a few other units received it ahead of schedule, based on their mission. — *ARNEWS*



Your Legal Daily Minimum Requirements

NUTRITIONISTS prescribe minimum daily requirements of vitamins and nutrients to keep us healthy. Those of us in the legal profession also recommend a few “daily requirements” for active-duty Soldiers, retirees and their family members — requirements we feel will help ensure your “legal health.”

As a minimum, we recommend that each adult have a general power of attorney, a medical health care power of attorney, a living will and a last will and testament.

Here are the details:



Powers of Attorney

Simply put, power of attorney (POA) is the generic name for the document that appoints a person to act for another person. The two major groups of

POA are the general and special. A termination date is normally stated that ends the given authority to perform the needed tasks. A clause may also be included that continues the authority if the principal becomes a prisoner of war, is listed as missing in action or is deemed incompetent. POAs cease upon the death of the principal, at which time the last will and testament takes over the affairs of the deceased. Therefore, a POA is not a substitute for a will.

Moreover, POAs cannot be used in every situation. For example, they cannot be used to vote in state and federal elections, to create wills, or to change beneficiaries for SGLI or VGLI life-insurance coverage. There is no law that requires persons or firms to accept a POA, and some private firms and government agencies will not accept POAs.

- ⊙ General POAs treat multiple property rights, including the buying, selling, mortgaging, shipping or leasing of property.
- ⊙ Special POAs deal with limited tasks and are usually tailored to accomplish a specific goal. Examples include selling an automobile, care and custody of children, leasing a home, purchasing property, and filing a claim or a tax return.
- ⊙ Health Care POAs provide an agent to handle the daily medical decisions made if the principal becomes

(continued next page)

Steven Chucala is chief of client services in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate at Fort Belvoir, Va.

temporarily or permanently unable to act. The authority granted normally concerns the selection of health-care providers and facilities, authorizes surgery and access to medical records, and obligates the principal to pay for the medical costs requested by the agent.

⊙ Durable POAs (also known as living wills) deal with a narrow area of medicine that concerns the termination of life support. They come into play if the patient is in a vegetative state, is stabilized and the doctors conclude the most they can do from that point forward is to simply prolong the dying process without any expectation of recovery.

The U.S. Supreme Court recognized the right to terminate life support if the patient's wish is established by "clear and convincing evidence." A written document — often referred to as a living will — satisfies that requirement. We recommend that a living will gives an agent or proxy (and an alternate) the authority to terminate intravenous feeding and hydration, and to issue "do not resuscitate" orders. A living will is not applicable if the patient is capable of making decisions. Nor can a person be denied medical care if they do not have a living will.



Wills are another essential element of estate planning. They provide for the administration of an estate, appointment of legal representatives to settle the affairs of the deceased, create trusts if needed for children, appoint guardians for minor children and set forth the distribution pattern of property.

Must I?

There is no civilian or military legal requirement to have a will, power of attorney or living will (except POAs for active-duty, single-parent Soldiers regarding child custody). However, I strongly recommend that the documents discussed above be routinely prepared by Soldiers and their spouses. I also strongly recommend that people don't put off preparing the documents until right before deploying, going on vacation or undergoing medical care.

Where?

All of the documents discussed in this article can be prepared by your local legal-assistance offices. If in doubt about whether you need any or all of these documents, consult your attorney.

Know the Law

CPT Scott Smiley

is a “wounded warrior.”

THAT title wouldn't have meant much a few years ago, when the general public was still coming to grips with the ugly realities of the war in Iraq. For the first time in more than a decade, troops were returning home with missing limbs, burns and broken bodies. Even the military didn't talk about it much; it was just bad press.

But all of that is changing. The focus is shifting from scars to sacrifice. And, Soldiers like **Smiley** are helping the nation realize that wounded Soldiers still have much to offer their country despite permanent injuries.

Assigned to the U.S. Army Accessions Command at Fort Monroe, Va., Smiley has turned injury into inspiration. Through public speaking engagements, local newspaper features and national television appearances the captain is shedding new light on what it means to serve one's country, despite the costs.

On April 6, 2005, Smiley's Stryker armored vehicle was attacked by a suicide bomber. Of the eight Soldiers in the vehicle, only Smiley was hurt. Shrapnel entered his brain through his left eye and the debris also damaged his right eye socket.

After emergency treatment, he was placed on a medical evacuation flight to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. There he was reunited with his family.

"I received an injury to the frontal part of the left side of my

brain," he said. "I remember that my wife and family constantly prayed for me. I heard them even when I was in a medically induced coma. I didn't really remember or understand what happened."

The 26-year-old said his focus changed when he understood where he was and the seriousness of his condition.


"I began thinking about my family," he added. "I started to understand that there is something greater than me and there is something better than me. Even though I was injured like this, the world kept on spinning; people were still going to work all around the country."

After rehabilitation at a hospital for the blind, Smiley received orders to Fort Monroe, where he is now the assistant to the G3 for initial military training. In his spare time, he has spoken to church groups in Virginia, Washington, Georgia and Hawaii. That's in addition to his many interviews with local and national reporters.

"A lot of times, when someone goes through trials and

adversities and still manages to have a positive outlook on life and still worships God like I did before, it motivates people," he said. "I think that's true now more than ever before. I believe we're here for a reason, and that's to worship God."

The captain credits his upbringing with giving him the strength he needed to endure the difficulties of the past year and a half.

"My mom would ask me, 'Did you read the Bible today?' If I said no, I wouldn't be able to go out and play," Smiley said. "It wasn't until I was on my own in college that I personally needed someone to help me in stressful situations." 

The captain credits his upbringing with giving him the strength he needed...



Patricia Radcliffe works at the Fort Monroe, Va., Public Affairs Office.

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For Army National Guard referrals, call 1-800-464-8273 ext. 3727, or visit www.1800goguard.com/esar



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Staff Sergeant Jeremy Mutart
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